

# COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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**For Immediate Release:** September 9, 2010

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## Confirmed human case of West Nile Virus in suburban Cook County

*Risk for contracting the virus still exist, basic prevention efforts key*

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials have confirmed a case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in a resident from Elgin, IL. The 30-year old woman experienced symptoms of headache, nausea, vomiting and photophobia approximately ten days after being bitten by mosquitoes while walking in a wooded area near her home. She was hospitalized on August 22, 2010, was treated for four days and released.

“Slightly cooler temperatures have the potential to give residents a false sense that we are out of West Nile Virus season,” said CCDPH chief operating officer Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H. “Until we have our first hard frost of the year, residents are still at risk for West Nile Virus. Residents need to continue talking basic precautions to avoid contracting this potentially life-threatening disease.”

Mosquitoes may transmit the virus to humans after feeding on a bird infected with WNV. The most effective way to prevent against becoming infected with WNV is to follow some basic steps:

- When outdoors between dusk and dawn, cover skin with lightly colored loose fitting clothing and use mosquito repellent with DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow the directions on the label.
- Get rid of standing water around your home in pet bowls, flower pots, old tires, baby pools and toys. Water that is allowed to stagnate for three or four days becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Make sure your doors and windows have tightly fitting screens and repair any tears or other openings.
- Keep weeds and grass cut short and keep gutters clean and free of debris.

The Culex mosquito known for carrying WNV thrives in warm, dry weather. Most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness and never become ill. But illness can occur 3-15 days after an infected mosquito bite and cause symptoms of fever, headache and body aches. The disease can affect all ages, but people over the age of 50 and those with chronic disease, such as heart disease or cancer may be at-risk for serious complications from encephalitis or meningitis. For that reason, people who experience high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, severe headaches, or a stiff neck should see a doctor immediately.

For more information please visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org), or call CCDPH at 708-492-2000.